

**NATIONAL****Witness Protection Scheme**

The Supreme Court has approved the Centre's draft witness protection scheme and has asked all the states to implement it till Parliament comes out with a legislation. The court has also made some changes in the scheme. The apex court held that scheme will become law under Article 141/142 of Constitution till enactment of parliamentary and state legislations on the subject.

**Highlights of the draft scheme:**

- The draft witness protection scheme has been finalized in consultation with the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD).
- The types of protection measures envisaged under the scheme are to be applied in proportion to the threat and they are not expected to go on for infinite time.
- The scheme envisages that there should be safeguards that witnesses and accused do not come face to face during investigation or trial and adequate security measures should be there for the safety of the witnesses.
- The scheme provides for identity protection and giving a new identity to the witness.
- The scheme shall extend to the whole of the India except the State of Jammu & Kashmir.
- As per the scheme, police escort will be provided to witnesses who are threatened and, if needed, they would be relocated to a safe house. The scheme also says mails and phone calls of the witnesses would be monitored to trace the person threatening them. It said a separate witness protection fund will be created in each state to meet the expenses incurred under the scheme.
- Witness deposition complexes will be set up in all district courts by the states and union territories within a year where the witnesses could fearlessly depose against the high and mighty without coming face-to-face with the accused.

**Three types of witnesses' threat:**

- Threat extends to life of witness or his family members during investigation, trial or thereafter.
- Threat extends to safety, reputation or property of witness or his family members, during investigation, trial.
- Threat is moderate and extends to harassment of witness or his family member's, reputation or property during investigation, trial or thereafter.

**India Water Impact Summit 2018, New Delhi**

India Water Impact Summit 2018 was jointly organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies in New Delhi.

**India Water Impact Summit**

- It is an annual event where stakeholders get together to discuss, debate and develop model solutions for some of the biggest water-related problems in the country.
- The discussions this year will be on the rejuvenation of the Ganga River Basin.
- There will be multi-country dialogue on the subject, with showcasing of technological innovations, research, policy frameworks and funding models from India and abroad.
- The efforts may take various forms including (but not limited to): data collection (sensors, LIDAR, modelling etc), hydrology, e-flows, agriculture, wastewater and more.

**Centre to bring back restrictions in Andaman Islands**

The Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Nand Kumar Sai, has said the Centre may like to revisit its decision to lift the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) system from 29 islands of Andaman and Nicobar, after the death of U.S. citizen John Allen Chau.

Mr. Sai, who is leading a delegation of the Commission to the islands, told that the lifting of the regime proved problematic and the decision had "many pros and cons that needed to be re-looked".

**RAP:** To develop tourism, the RAP regime, in place since 1963, was lifted around August this year from 29 islands, including the North Sentinel (where Chau was reportedly killed). Though the regime was withdrawn, a tourist is required to take permission from the Forest Department and the local administration as it is protected under two other Acts.

**INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL****India & Peru sign cooperation on customs matters**

An Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Peru on Co-operation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters was signed today in Mumbai, on the side-lines of the 80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the World Customs Organisations (WCO).

The three day 80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the WCO was organised by the Central Board of Customs and Indirect Taxes (CBIC), Government of India in Mumbai, India, from 3rd to 5th December 2018.

The Agreement was signed by Mr. S. Ramesh, Chairman, CBIC on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Rafael Garcia, as the National Superintendent of Customs on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Peru.

The Agreement provides a legal framework for sharing of information and intelligence between the Customs authorities of the two countries and will help in the proper application of Customs laws, prevention and investigation of Customs offences.

The Agreement will also help in the availability of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of Customs offences. The Agreement is expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the two countries.

**ECONOMY****Bi-monthly Monetary Policy:**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its fifth bimonthly monetary policy review for financial year 2018-19 has decided to maintain status quo in policy rates by keeping repo rate unchanged at 6.5%. The reverse repo rate has also been maintained at 6.25%. This decision was taken by RBI's six member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Urjit Patel.

The decision of MPC is consistent with stance of calibrated tightening of monetary policy in consonance with objective of achieving medium-term target for consumer price index (CPI) inflation of 4% within band of +/- 2 per cent, while supporting growth. It has projected retail inflation projection lowered in the range of 2.7-3.2% for 2nd half of 2018-19; 3.8-4.2% in first half of 2019-20. It has forecasted GDP growth for 2018-19 at 7.4% and 7.5% for first half of 2019-20.

**Policy Rates**

- Repo rate: It was unchanged at 6.5%. It is rate at which RBI lends to its clients generally against government securities.
- Reverse Repo Rate: It was unchanged at 6.25%. It is rate at which banks lend funds to RBI.
- Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate: It was unchanged at 6.75%. It is rate at which scheduled banks can borrow funds overnight from RBI against government securities. It is very short term borrowing scheme for scheduled banks.
- Bank Rate: It was unchanged at 6.75%. It is rate charged by central bank for lending funds to commercial banks. Higher bank rate will translate to higher lending rates by banks. It influences lending rates of commercial banks.

**ENVIRONMENT****Global Carbon Project Report**

Global carbon emissions are set to hit an all-time high of 37.1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2018, according to researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the Global Carbon Project.

**Highlights of the study:**

India, the third-highest contributor, is projected to see emissions rise by 6.3% from 2017. The 2.7% projected global rise in 2018 has been driven by appreciable growth in coal use for the second year in a row, and sustained growth in oil and gas use.

The 10 biggest emitters in 2018 are China, U.S., India, Russia, Japan, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Canada. The EU as a region of countries ranks third. China's emissions accounted

for 27% of the global total, having grown an estimated 4.7% in 2018 and reaching a new all-time high.

Global Carbon Project:

The Global Carbon Project works collaboratively with the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, the World Climate Programme, the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change and Diversities, under the Earth System Science Partnership. It was formed to work with the international science community to establish a common and mutually agreed knowledge base to support policy debate and action to slow down and ultimately stop the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**World Soil Day:** World Soil Day is celebrated every year on 5th of December by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations. It aims to communicate messages on importance of soil quality for food security, healthy ecosystems and human well-being. The theme for this year was 'Be the Solution to Soil Pollution'.

**Odisha's New Programme PEETHA For Transparency, Awareness Of Government Schemes**

Odisha Chief Minister announced a new programme for peoples Empowerment - Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives (PEETHA) - aimed at creating awareness about various schemes and improving transparency in distribution of individual and social benefits

**National Integration Tour for Jammu & Kashmir**

The National Integration Tours are educational and motivational tours for youth of Jammu & Kashmir and North Eastern States. It aims to provide an insight into the rich heritage of the country as well as various developmental and industry initiatives that are underway. This initiative will expose them to various career options and enable them to interact with renowned personalities.

The National Integration Tour has been initiated as part of the Indian Army's ongoing outreach programme to foster the spirit of National Integration across the entire swathe of the country.